

100 Words A - F

ab•jure (ăb-jŭŕ) *tr.v.* **-jured, -jur•ing, -jures** 1. To renounce under oath; forswear. 2. To recant solemnly; repudiate: *abjure one's beliefs*. 3. To give up (an action or practice, for example); abstain from. [ME *abjuren* < OFr. *abjurer* < Lat. *abiūrāre* : *ab-*, away; see *AB*–¹ + *iūrāre*, to swear.] —**ab'ju•ra'tion** *n.* —**ab•jur'er** *n.*

ab•ro•gate (ăb-rŏ-gāt') *tr.v.* **-gat•ed, -gat•ing, -gates** To abolish, do away with, or annul. [Lat. *abrogāre, abrogāt-* : *ab-*, away; see *AB*–¹ + *rogāre*, to ask; see *reg-* in App.] —**ab'ro•ga'tion** *n.*

ab•ste•mi•ous (ăb-stē'mē-əs, əb-) *adj.* 1. Eating and drinking in moderation. 2a. Sparingly used or consumed. b. Restricted to bare necessities. [< Lat. *abstēmius* : *abs-*, *ab-*, away; see *AB*–¹ + **tēmum*, liquor, var. of *tēmētum*.] —**ab•ste'mi•ous•ly** *adv.* —**ab•ste'mi•ous•ness** *n.*

ac•u•men (ăk'yə-mən, ə-kyŏŏ'-) *n.* Quickness and keenness of judgment or insight. [Lat. *acūmen* < *acuere*, to sharpen < *acus*, needle. See *ak-* in App.]

USAGE NOTE The pronunciation (ə-kyŏŏ'-mən), with stress on the second syllable, is an older, traditional pronunciation reflecting the word's Latin origin. In recent years it has been supplanted as the most common pronunciation of the word by a variant with stress on the first syllable, (ăk'yə-mən). In a recent survey, 68 percent of the Usage Panelists chose this as their pronunciation, while 29 percent preferred the pronunciation with stress on the second syllable. The remaining 3 percent of the Panelists said they use both pronunciations.

an•te•bel•lum (ăn'tē-bĕl'əm) *adj.* Belonging to the period before a war, esp. the American Civil War. [< Lat. *ante bellum*, before the war : *ante*, before; see *ANTE* + *bellum*, war.]

aus•pi•cious (ô-spîsh'əs) *adj.* 1. Attended by favorable circumstances; propitious. See Syns at **favorable**. 2. Successful; prosperous. —**aus•pi'cious•ly** *adv.* —**aus•pi'cious•ness** *n.*

be•lie (bĭ-lī') *tr.v.* **-lied, -ly•ing, -lies** 1. To picture falsely; misrepresent: "He spoke roughly in order to belie his air of gentility" (James Joyce). 2. To show to be false: *His smile belied his ire*. 3. To be counter to; contradict. [ME *bilien* < OE *belēogan*, to deceive with lies. See *leugh-* in App.] —**be•li'er** *n.*

bel•li•cose (bĕl'i-kŏs') *adj.* Warlike in manner or temperament; pugnacious. [ME < Lat. *bellicŏsus* < *bellicus*, of war < *bellum*, war.] —**bel'li•cose•ly** *adv.* —**bel'li•cos'i•ty** (-kŏs'i-tē) *n.*

bowd•ler•ize (bŏd'lə-rīz', boud'-) *tr.v.* **-ized, -iz•ing, -izes** 1. To expurgate (a book, for example) prudishly. 2. To modify, as by shortening or simplifying or by skewing content. [After Thomas Bowdler (1754–1825), who expurgated Shakespeare.] —**bowd'ler•ism** *n.* —**bowd'ler•i•za'tion** (-lə-rī-ză'shən) *n.* —**bowd'ler•iz'er** *n.*

chi•can•er•y (shĭ-kā'nə-rē, chĭ-) *n., pl. -ies* 1. Deception by trickery or sophistry. 2. A trick; a subterfuge.

chro•mo•some (krŏ'mə-sŏm') *n.* 1. A threadlike linear strand of DNA and associated proteins in the nucleus of eukaryotic cells that carries the genes and functions in the transmission of hereditary information. 2. A circular strand of DNA in bacteria that contains the hereditary information necessary for cell life. —**chro'mo•so'mal** (-sŏ'məl), **chro'mo•so'mic** (-sŏ'mik) *adj.* —**chro'mo•so'mal•ly** *adv.*

churl•ish (chŭr'lĭsh) *adj.* 1. Of, like, or befitting a churl; boorish or vulgar. 2. Having a bad disposition; surly. 3. Difficult to work with, such as soil; intractable. —**churl'ish•ly** *adv.* —**churl'ish•ness** *n.*

cir•cum•lo•cu•tion (sŭr'kəm-lŏ-kyŏŏ'shən) *n.* 1. The use of unnecessarily wordy and indirect language. 2. Evasion in speech or writing. 3. A roundabout expression. [Ult. < Lat. *circumlocutiō, circumlocutiō-* < *circumlocutus*, p. part. of *circumloqui* : *circum-*, *circum-* + *loqui*, to speak.] —**cir'cum•loc'u•to'ri•ly** (-lŏk'yə-tŏr'ə-lē, -tŏr'-) *adv.* —**cir'cum•loc'u•to'ry** (-tŏr'ē, -tŏr'ē) *adj.*

cir•cum•nav•i•gate (sŭr'kəm-năv'i-gāt') *tr.v.* **-gat•ed, -gat•ing, -gates** 1. To proceed completely around: *circumnavigating the earth*. 2. To go around; circumvent. —**cir'cum•nav'i•ga'tion** *n.* —**cir'cum•nav'i•ga'tor** *n.*

de•cid•u•ous (dĭ-sĭj'ŏŏ-əs) *adj.* 1. Falling off or shed at a specific season or stage of growth: *deciduous antlers*. 2. Shedding or losing foliage at the end of the growing season: *deciduous trees*. 3. Not lasting; ephemeral. [< Lat. *deciduus* < *decidere*, to fall off : *dē-*, *de-* + *cadere*, to fall.] —**de•cid'u•ous•ly** *adv.* —**de•cid'u•ous•ness** *n.*

del•e•te•ri•ous (dĕl'i-tîr'ē-əs) *adj.* Having a harmful effect; injurious. [< Gk. *deleterios* < *deleter*, destroyer < *deleisthai*, to harm.] —**del'e•te'ri•ous•ly** *adv.* —**del'e•te'ri•ous•ness** *n.*

dif•fi•dent (dĭf'i-dənt, -dĕnt') *adj.* 1. Lacking or marked by a lack of self-confidence; shy and timid. See Syns at **shy**! 2. Reserved in manner. [ME < Lat. *diffidēs, diffident-*, pr. part. of *diffidere*, to mistrust : *dis-*, *dis-* + *fidere*, to trust; see *bheidh-* in App.] —**dif'fi•dent•ly** *adv.*

en•er•vate (ĕn'ər-vāt') *tr.v.* **-vat•ed, -vat•ing, -vates** 1. To weaken or destroy the strength or vitality of. See Syns at **deplete**. 2. *Medicine* To remove a nerve or part of a nerve. ♦ *adj.* (i-nŭr'vīt) Deprived of strength; debilitated. [Lat. *ēnervāre, ēnervāt-* : *ē-*, *ex-*, *ex-* + *nervus*, sinew.] —**en'er•va'tion** *n.* —**en'er•va'tive** *adj.* —**en'er•va'tor** *n.*

USAGE NOTE Sometimes people mistakenly use *enervate* to mean "to invigorate" or "to excite" by assuming that it is a close cousin of *energize*. In fact, *enervate* means essentially the opposite. It comes from Latin *nervus*, "sinew," and thus means "to cause to become 'out of muscle,'" that is, "to weaken or deplete of strength." It has no historical connection with *energize*.

en•fran•chise (ĕn-frăn'chīz') *tr.v.* **-chised, -chis•ing, -chis•es** 1. To bestow a franchise on. 2. To endow with the rights of citizenship, esp. the right to vote. 3. To free, as from bondage. [ME *enfranchisen* < OFr. *enfranchir, enfranchiss-*, to set free : *en-*, intensive pref.; see *EN*–¹ + *franchir* (< *franc*, free; see *FRANK*!)] —**en•fran'chise'ment** *n.*

e•piph•a•ny (ĭ-pĭf'ə-nē) *n., pl. -nies* 1. **Epiphany** A Christian feast celebrating the manifestation of the divine nature of Jesus to the Gentiles as represented by the Magi, traditionally observed on January 6. 2. A revelatory manifestation of a divine being. 3a. A sudden manifestation of the essence or meaning of something. b. A comprehension or perception of reality by means of a sudden intuitive realization. [ME *epiphanie* < OFr. < LLat. *epiphania* < Gk. *epiphaneia*, manifestation < *epiphainesthai*, to appear : *epi-*, forth; see *EPI*– + *phainein, phan-*, to show.] —**ep'i•phan'ic** (ĕp'ə-făn'ik) *adj.*

e•qui•nox (ē'kwə-nōks', ĕk'wə-) *n.* **1.** Either of two points on the celestial sphere at which the ecliptic intersects the celestial equator. **2.** Either of the two times during a year when the sun crosses the celestial equator and when day and night are of approximately equal length. [ME < OFr. *equinoxe* < Med.Lat. *aequinoxium* < Lat. *aequinoctium*: *aequi-*, *equi-* + *nox*, *noct-*, night; see **nekʷ-t-** in App.]

eu•ro or **Eu•ro** (yoor'ō) *n., pl. -ros* or **-ro's** The basic unit of currency among members of the European Monetary Union. [After EUROPE.]

ev•a•nes•cent (ĕv'ə-nēs'ənt) *adj.* Vanishing or likely to vanish like vapor. —**ev•a•nes•cent•ly** *adv.*

ex•pur•gate (ĕk'spər-gāt') *tr.v. -gat•ed, -gat•ing, -gates* To remove erroneous, vulgar, obscene, or otherwise objectionable material from (a book, for example) before publication. [Lat. *expurgāre*, *expurgāt-*, to purify: *ex-*, intensive pref.; see **EX-** + *pūr-gāre*, to cleanse.] —**ex'pur•ga'tion** *n.* —**ex'pur•ga'tor** *n.*

fa•ce•tious (fə-sē'shəs) *adj.* Playfully jocular; humorous. [Fr. *facétieux* < *facétie*, jest < Lat. *facētia* < *facētus*, witty.] —**fa•ce'tious•ly** *adv.* —**fa•ce'tious•ness** *n.*

fat•u•ous (fäch'ōō-əs) *adj.* **1.** Vacuously, smugly, and unconsciously foolish. **2.** Delusive; unreal. [< Lat. *fatuus*.] —**fat'u•ous•ly** *adv.* —**fat'u•ous•ness** *n.*

feck•less (fĕk'līs) *adj.* **1.** Feeble or ineffective. **2.** Careless and irresponsible. [Sc. *feck*, effect (alteration of EFFECT) + -LESS.] —**feck'less•ly** *adv.* —**feck'less•ness** *n.*

fi•du•ci•ar•y (fī-dōō'shē-ēr'ē, -shə-rē, -dyōō'-, fī-) *adj.* **1a.** Of or relating to a holding of something in trust for another. **b.** Of or being a trustee or trusteeship. **c.** Held in trust. **2.** Of or consisting of fiat money. **3.** Of, relating to, or being a system of marking in the field of view of an optical instrument that is used as a reference point or measuring scale. ♦ *n., pl. -ies* One, such as a company director, that has a special relation of trust or responsibility in certain obligations to others. [Lat. *fīdūciārius* < *fīdūcia*, trust. See FIDUCIAL.]

fil•i•bus•ter (fīl'ə-būs'tər) *n.* **1a.** The use of obstructionist tactics, esp. prolonged speechmaking, in order to delay legislative action. **b.** An instance of the use of this delaying tactic. **2.** An adventurer who engages in a private military action in a foreign country. ♦ *v. -tered, -ter•ing, -ters* —*intr.* **1.** To use obstructionist tactics in a legislative body. **2.** To take part in a private military action in a foreign country. —*tr.* To use a filibuster against (a legislative measure, for example). [< Sp. *filibustero*, freebooter < Fr. *flibustier* < Du. *vrijbuit*, pirate. See FREEBOOTER.] —**fil'i•bus'ter•er** *n.*

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